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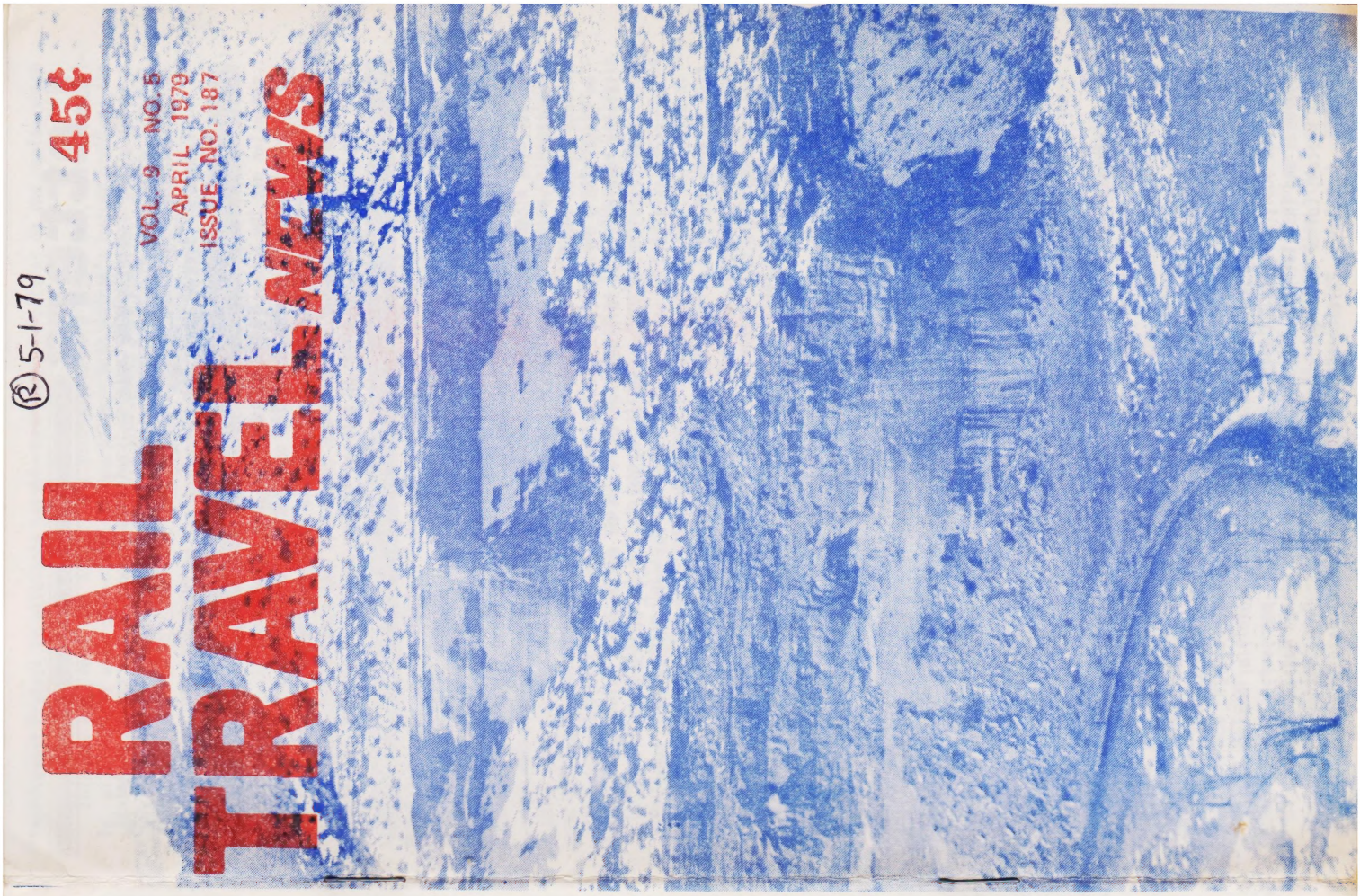
VOL. 9 NO. 5
APRIL 1979
ISSUE NO. 187

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS



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As in past issues this valuable compilation contains a listing in numerical order of all Railroad, Operating Authority, and Transit passenger cars in active service during 1978 showing prior owners, names and numbers, builder and year built.

Besides showing disposition of all cars retired in the past couple of years, we have a special feature in this volume showing the complete disposition of over 400 Amtrak cars sold since the energy crises in 1974.

Note: The amount of material to be included in the Private Owner and Museum section has become so great that this will have to be covered in a separate Volume from now on. You will be advised of this volume and the price as soon as we can schedule a publication date. Our goal is to have this out before Christmas 1978.

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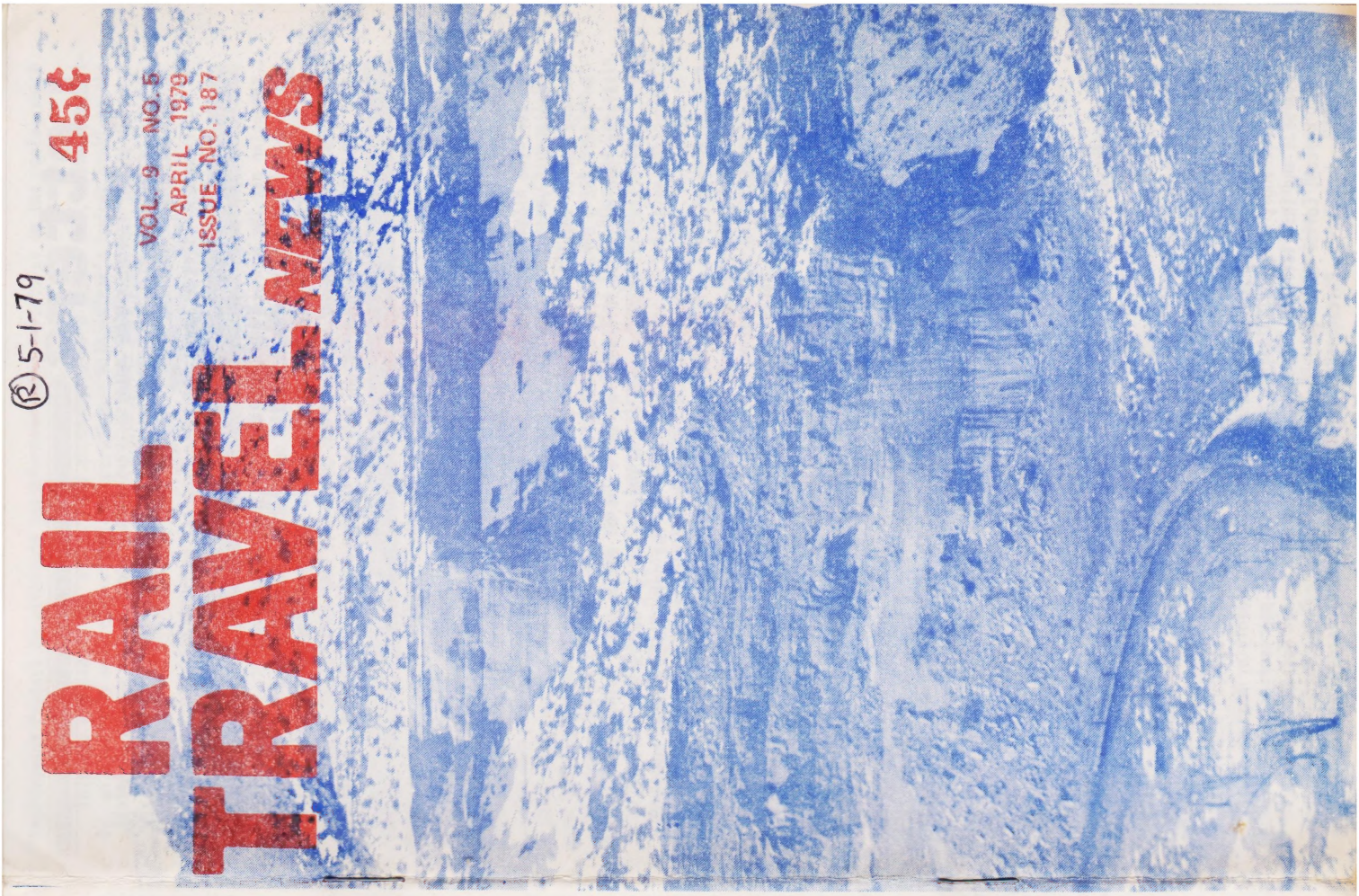

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Letters

The letter from an Amtrak Employee (last issue) about no one caring at Amtrak is perfectly true, as I too have seen this so much in evidence. Let me give you a good example:

In February I took my Honor Scouts to Montreal on the MONTREALER. Besides the train being late because of a power failure aboard, the 20 seats which I had so meticulously planned with Amtrak to have held were not held, and neither the Amtrak conductor nor the Conrail conductor cared to do a thing about it. They advised us to move the group 12 cars back despite our protests that this was not what our Travel Advisory Notice from Amtrak stated. In addition, the only reason that there were seats in the last car we were directed to was that someone had vomited all over the place. Finally, after 30 minutes of very unpleasant arguing, we got relatively decent seats.

In Montreal the passenger agent had been asked to obtain transportation for our group to the Holiday Inn, as we were on an Amtrak "Snowball" tour. He rused categorically because he was too busy with other things.

On the return trip the conductor on the ADIRONDACK not only was rude, but when the train hit debris on the track, delaying it for 3½ hours, he could be found nowhere except in the engine with the hostess. This conductor also had to be begged to call the Albany Tower to relay a message to worried parents waiting for our Scouts that we would be very late. Since the disabled Turboliner was only going to Albany and we found out about the blizzard that hit the New York metropolitan area on Washington's Birthday,we asked the conductor if he could do anything about obtaining lodging for us in Albany, as there was no way we could get from New York to New Jersey late that night because of the delays and the severe snowstorm. The conductor again said he couldn't care less. It was only the passenger supervisor in Albany--Mr. Joseph Arcuri--who saw that we had a severe problem, especially with two sick Scouts, and offered his help and saw to it that we had lodging for the night and also food, as our train had not even been stocked with food in Montreal prior to departure.

Out of all of those Amtrak and Conrail employees, only one was decent enough to respond to a call for help. None wanted to be bothered about any prior arrangements that had been made, and none cared what happened to our group other than the supervisor in Albany. Even one conductor on the ADIRONDACK pushed passengers aside at Port Henry NY so he could get to use the telephone first.

The letter writer is correct. If Amtrak were run for profit, these things would not happen very often and nightmares like my group and I had to endure would rarely occur. Is it any wonder that we will probably take Greyhound to Williamsburg VA this summer when some of our Scouts go there with me? I love railroads and I want to support them, but these things have happened too many times in the past few years to me both as an individual riding the train and as a troop leader. How much of this can people endure?

Dr. Allan H. Toub
Scoutmaster, BSA Troop 99
Hillside, New Jersey

I understand that Amtrak wants to spend almost $12 million for the complete overhaul and electrical conversion of 59 cars and 9 locomotives for the LAKE SHORE LIMITED. I must ask if it was ever considered by Amtrak to use this $12 million along with possible additional funds from the State of New York's Empire Service Improvement Project to eliminate height-restricting structures on the route, which would allow use of the new Superliner cars on the train.

This new equipment will attract and accommodate more riders and, most importantly, will offer a more cost-efficient operation. With Amtrak's budget problems the way that they are, an investment of this type seems more practical than a conversion of outdated, less efficient equipment.

Richard A. Andre
Brookline, Massachusetts

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ON THE COVER

Still threatened by a proposed route cutback, the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, DRGW eastbound train 18, with all five domes and a flattop coach, negotiates Westwater Canyon in Colorado on March 4, 1979. Aerial photography by Paul Rayton.

★ APRIL 29 SCHEDULE CHANGES ANNOUNCED

Spring Amtrak schedule changes, effective with the April 29 changeover to Daylight Saving Time, were summarized in our last issue. More details are now available. The eastbound SOUTHWEST LIMITED, being lengthened by 30 minutes, will leave Los Angeles at the same time as now, 7:30pm, but arrive Chicago 2:05pm, a half hour later than now. The LONE STAR's schedule is lengthened 30 minutes each way. It will leave Chicago at 4:10pm (20mins earlier) and reach Houston at 7:55pm instead of 7:45, while the Ft. Worth arrival time is 12:50pm and Dallas is 2:10pm (both slightly earlier than present times). Houston departure is 7:40am instead of 7:10, while Dallas departure to Chicago is 1:05pm and Ft. Worth 2:30pm for an 11:25am arrival in Chicago (one hour later than now).

The INTER-AMERICAN will run daily instead of tri-weekly starting June 15 from Chicago and June 17 from Laredo, with tri-weekly service resuming after Labor Day. Sleeping car service will continue tri-weekly, however, with Amtrak blaming its equipment shortage for that state of affairs. Train times remain unchanged.

The three Indiana cities served by the NATIONAL LIMITED will have different train times, since that state does not observe Daylight Time. In Ohio, the train will leave westbound from Columbus at 7:25am (5mins earlier) and from Dayton at 9:10am (2mins earlier). Endpoint times are unchanged, except NY arrival is 2mins later.

New York-Florida schedules are being adjusted because of heavier construction activity in the NE Corridor. SILVER STAR: northbound, no changes Florida to Baltimore; 35mins added Baltimore to New York. No changes southbound. SILVER METEOR: Northbound, no change Miami to Baltimore; 30mins added Baltimore to NY. Southbound, slight changes at most points as far as Richmond. CHAMPION: No change St. Petersburg to Baltimore; 15mins added Baltimore-NY. No change southbound. PALMETTO: Northbound, no changes Savannah to Washington; 17mins added to New York. Southbound, 25mins added NY-Washington with schedule modified at all subsequent stops including Savannah.

Express schedules begin Apr 29 for two New York-Albany trains: the HENRY HUDSON will skip Poughkeepsie and Croton-Harmon, and leaving Albany/Rensselaer at 6:50am, will reach New York's Grand Central Terminal at 9:25am. Northbound, the WASHINGTON IRVING, leaving NY at 4:45pm, will also skip those stops and reach Albany at 7:20pm. Both these trains will operate 15mins faster than at present. The NIAGARA RAINBOW (NY-Niagara Falls) will run 10mins faster each direction.

The CRESCENT will get some changes. Travel time south of Washington will not be affected, but arrival and departure times at most stations along the route will change between 10 and 25mins, because of the NE Corridor track work and the addition of a stop at Manassas VA. On the NY-Washington portion, the train will take 15mins longer southbound and 39mins longer northbound.

The CARDINAL will begin serving Alderson WV on Apr 29 and discontinue service at South Portsmouth KY (because of falling patronage due to a closed highway bridge over the Ohio River; the stop will be reinstated when the bridge reopens next year, Amtrak said--if the train is still running).

There will be minor changes in the LAKE SHORE LIMITED schedule. In the Midwest, several Chicago-St. Louis trains will run 5mins faster, while Chicago-Detroit trains will run 10mins slower.

As reported last issue, all NE Corridor trains will have slower running times because of the increasing amount of track work starting there.

★ AMTRAK PATRONAGE RISES AS BATTLE OVER SYSTEM CUTS HEATS UP

As the May 15 deadline for Congress to reject the DOT plan to cut back the Amtrak system by 43% nears, Amtrak is reporting that advance reservations are running 40% higher than last year, and in recent weeks ridership has been increasing significantly--up nearly 30% compared to last year, Amtrak said. The rise in rail ridership has been influenced strongly by the current energy crunch, which in the past week has found the $1.00 per gallon gasoline price barrier broken in at least one state, Hawaii, far sooner than had earlier been anticipated. (Locally, we find that the lowest-priced gasoline is now 79.9¢ per gallon, compared with the 49.9¢ we reported not long ago.) Also helping Amtrak's patronage at present is a strike of United Air Lines that began the evening of March 30. Because of Amtrak's shortage of equipment, soldout trains are frequently reported, and travelers are advised to make spring and summer reservations well in advance.

The above facts are ones which will be used by rail supporters as strong arguments for maintaining the nationwide rail system intact. In addition, on the positive side, support for Amtrak has been growing in the media and among the public in the past few weeks. The Senate Commerce Committee has delayed until May 1 a consideration of a bill regarding the DOT plan. As of mid-April, it was believed by Washington sources that of the threatened trains most likely to be saved, the MONTREALER, CRESCENT and the Florida trains have the best chance of survival. The FLORIDIAN, however, is a "very endangered species" said a source. One West Virginia train might be dropped, and the SOUTHWEST LIMITED still seems likely to be lost. Other routes were not commented upon, but the western portion of the country is much more threatened than the eastern part.

THE UNKNOWN BUREAUCRAT

DOT Secretary Brock Adams is taking all the political flack for the proposed cutbacks, but a Washington source pointed out that actually the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is responsible for the stingy Amtrak budget. Adams earlier fought to get $100 million restored for Amtrak from the OMB's initially budget, and the current Amtrak budgetary problem is the work of some "faceless bureaucrat" in OMB, the source noted, who doesn't have to face any repercussions for his actions.

However, Adams has been forcefully testifying before Congress on Amtrak's alleged shortcomings. On Apr 3 he told the House Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce that Amtrak is an "energy waster." Said Adams, "Virtually all of the trains that I have proposed to be discontinued are long-distance trains that consume large amounts of fuel to pull the dining, lounge and low-density sleeping cars found on that kind of train." (Reports said that Amtrak's Alan Boyd gave the subcommittee different energy efficiency figures that refuted Adams's argument.)

On Apr 12 Adams told Congress that "The U.S. Government could buy every Birmingham passenger who rides the FLORIDIAN to Chicago or Miami a first class airline ticket for the money it costs to subsidize that train." Adams said the tax savings his cutback plan would allow would be "almost $1.4 billion over 5 years" (Ed. note: that amounts to about $280 million per year, or about $1 per capita).

The reaction from the public and the press has become increasingly in favor of retaining the present level of service. Elsewhere in this issue we present more information on this matter.

RAIL CANADA

See Canada, close up, with a VIA train tour.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION on Mar 26 ordered continuation of CP trains 167 and 172 between Montreal and Mont-Laurier pending a final decision. These are the Friday and Sunday trains respectively. The CTC also ordered CP to continue, from Jun 23 to Oct 14 and from Dec 29 to Mar 16, 1980, operation of experimental Montreal-Labelle train service.

VIA RAIL CANADA is currently running one-column ads in U.S. prestige magazines such as the New Yorker, Gourmet, and American Express's Travel & Leisure, using artwork shown at left.

MARITIMES RAIL RIDERSHIP has grown surprisingly in recent months. Some unofficial figures show ridership east of Moncton up 46% for the Jan 1 to Mar 7 period. Traffic east to the Maritimes out of Montreal is reported up 37% for the same time. Rail supporters are concerned that existing equipment is inadequate to handle such a growth rate.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION may hold hearings on the Dominion Atlantic Railway service as early as May, RTN has learned.

U.S. COAST GUARD has turned down CP Rail's request for an exemption for the "Princess Patricia" which would have allowed the ship to continue operations in U.S.'s Alaska waters without a sewage holding tank (this reverses our news item in the last issue; this matter is the subject of an ad on p. 19 of this issue).

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE between U.S. and Canadian rail travel? RTN's Peter Bretz, just back from Canada, says: "VIA is much, much better in all respects. Someone in Canada asked my opinion as the best thing about VIA. I can say that EVERYTHING WORKS, and employees do their jobs. There are no surprises."

THE PROPOSED DISCONTINUANCE of Edmonton-Red Deer-Calgary passenger trains is the subject of Canadian Transport Commission hearings the week of Apr 23-27, while hearings on the discontinuance of Regina-Saskatoon-Prince Albert service will be held as follows: Apr 30 Prince Albert, May 1 Saskatoon, May 3 Regina. Any member of the public or organization is free to appear at these hearings. Rail supporters plan to support strongly the improvement of the latter service by 1) decreasing running times, 2) the use of downtown terminals, 3) doubling VIA's commitment of equipment to the railiner service, and 4) by a reasonable marketing effort.

Towns along the Edmonton-Calgary route have joined in the battle to save their rail service. Rail supporters are asking why this route is up for proposed abandonment. A recent article in Le Droit (Ottawa) quoted VIA's M. Frank Roberts as proposing a single transcontinental train running, in the Prairies, thru Regina and Calgary. This was the first specific reference to VIA's thinking regarding transcon service in the Prairies. There have been many references to the idea of a single transcon train, but the Winnipeg-Vancouver route has been conspicuously unidentified. The question now is, if Edmonton and Saskatoon are to be served by intercity service, why is Edmoton-Calgary up for abandonment? This would leave these cities without rail access to the West Coast, if both plans (dropping Edmonton-Calgary and dropping Edmonton-Vancouver) are carried out.

At a transportation seminar in Red Deer on Apr 6, several resolutions were ap-

proved: that Alberta take the lead in recognizing and helping support rail passenger service to the smaller towns in the Edmonton-Calgary corridor; that VIA improve service in that corridor; that the CTC require VIA to run the Edmonton-Calgary service into the CN Tower terminal in Edmonton; that the minimum fare concept be discontinued in that corridor as unfair for the area and type of service; and that travel modes be integrated at intermodal stations.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

PHOTO AT RIGHT shows FP10 diesel #1100 on Boston's MBTA, at South Station in Feb. This is former GM&O engine 805A rebuilt in the ICG's Paducah Shops in 1978. Here it pulls GO cars on the MBTA's line to Framingham. As of Mar 14 there were two sets of GO cars in service, to Framingham and to Reading. The train shown runs as a non-push-pull on one daily roundtrip. GO cars assigned to the run were 9945, 9946, 9935, 9953, and 1040. Photo by Peter Roehm.

THE BART TUBE between San Francisco and Oakland finally reopened for service on Apr 5, having been closed after a Jan 17 fire on a westbound train. BART said that first-day morning commuters numbered about 19,000, compared with the normal 24,000. BART continued its shuttle bus service across the bay until 10am on the reopening day for the convenience of those who had not heard the news that the underwater service was once more available. The shuttle buses cost BART $1.2 million, it was reported. On Friday, Apr 6 the San Francisco-Berkeley ferry made its last roundtrip across the bay, with a capacity load (see RTN #184).

CARTER'S ENERGY PLAN to decontrol domestic oil prices and impose a windfall profits tax on oil companies, announced Apr 5, includes an "Energy Security Fund" of $11.4 billion from taxes that would give $2.1 billion in aid to the poor, $8.6 billion to increase domestic energy sources, and $700,000 to improve mass transit. Critics are complaining that altho the mass transit funds are frequently touted as the main provision of the fund, the $700,000 proposed is only enough to buy two articulated streetcars.

CALGARY HAS PURCHASED 28 DuWag articulated streetcars in West Germany and has initiated construction of a light-rail line which will extend from the downtown transit mall southeast along CP Rail's Calgary-Lethbridge route. The route will run on the surface in city streets in the city center.

PATRONAGE CONTINUES TO RISE on a makeshift transit system in Kitsap and Jefferson counties of Washington, northwest of Seattle. A 68-ft passenger-only ferry across Hood Canal is met with buses on the south for Bremerton and Winslow, and on the north by buses to Port Townsend. The service began Feb 26 after collapse of the Hood Canal Floating Bridge in 115mph winds Feb 13.

WASHINGTON'S METRORAIL SYSTEM will get a new general manager this month--Richard Page, now UMTA Administrator. Present manager Theodore Lutz is resigning. Senator Mathias of Maryland introduced a bill to ensure federal funds to complete the 101-mile Metrorail system "on a timely schedule."

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY in Chicago released a 5-year plan early this month, and it calls for increasing peak-hour service in all parts of the city, and four new ICG stations and improvements to other stations.

SNOW ON WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY
PART ONE: EAST
by Alan Crossley

Four to six inches was the snow forecast for Philadelphia on the eve of Washington's Birthday, of which maybe 10 to 12 had already fallen when I awoke the next morning. Surprise! And oh-oh. SEPTA was reporting bus, trolley and rail delays. Amtrak said Metroliners--because they were using "a different type of locomotive" (diesels now, no more GG1s?)--were 20 to 30 minutes down. This sounded believable, but of course so had last night's forecast. I just had to hope that train 172, the 11:20 PATRIOT north, would not be too far in the hole for my trip back to New London. Considering it carried connecting cars from the CRESCENT, and that overnight snow had already closed airports as far south as Atlanta, this might be hoping quite a bit.

With three sides closed, there was a good chance that the Ryers shelter on the Reading Division's Fox Chase line would not face directly into the wind and blowing snow. Wrong. I watched as the blizzard quickly covered the rails plowed out by a Fox Chase train. Even tho Conrail had already thrown out the schedules this morning, that pair of Silverliners would momentarily double back along the single track toward Reading Terminal, and I should still have no trouble making 172's departure.

Not so momentarily we flagged down Silverliners 155-156. We had to--visibility was that bad. Mysteriously they stopped over a carlength short of the shelter, but bu then a few more steps in the snow hardly mattered. Soon after boarding I found out why we had to wait half an hour for the turn at Fox Chase, only a couple of minutes up the line. Brake control problems in the lead cab forced the engineer to run the train from the rear of 156 while another crewman rode shotgun up front to call out signals and spot passengers for him, using the train's p.a. More than once we approached signals at walking speed ("Easy does it, Bill, until I get a look at it") to avoid overrunning any red boards we simply could not see from more than 100 feet. The conductor had few fares to pick up, as the train was nearly empty, most Philadelphia department stores having announced closings despite special holiday sales. Eleven-twenty was beginning to look doubtful, but as I looked out front into the swirling white where the track was supposed to be, I began to suspect that Amtrak was having more problems than it had let on.

Arriving at Reading Terminal shortly before 11:00, I dashed downstairs to the Market-Frankford Line's 11th St. station for the ride west to 30th Street. No need. Operation on the el (it is "the el" even while underground) was the same sort of slow-motion affair as Conrail's. Some of those on the platform had been there almost half an hour, while down below a small mouse scooted fearlessly among the rails and ties, out of harm's way, given the prevailing frequency of service. We learned from the woman in the fare booth that one el train had just rear-ended another up near the northeast end of elevated track, injuring several. Eastbound runs, she said, would be cut short. The all-weather mode was in trouble.

At about 11:15 an eastbound train came by--the other guy's train is always first --returning a few minutes later after being turned, apparently, at 5th Street. It was three stops to 30th Street Station.

I reached the station concourse at about 11:35, and could see even from 100 feet that the usual rack of ON TIMES on the Solari board had been replaced by several entries in ominously fine print. DELAYED ACCOUNT STORM were the words opposite almost every train, including the PATRIOT, tho I noted with only the briefest surge of gratification that I could catch an earlier train, 170, the 9:20 MINUTE MAN. The only northbound with an active status, it was posted 2hrs 45mins late. This proved to be a wildly optimistic assessment.

Within a few minutes the staff at the information booth heard from Baltimore, which is 90 minutes away on a good day, that 170 was still there, possibly be-

cause of a frozen switch. The 2hr 45min facade promptly collapsed into DELAYED ACCOUNT STORM conformity. Altho this new information was not announced generally, it was given to inquiring passengers, any complainers being reminded that roads and airports were also closed. Hearing the showpiece main line of the Standard Railroad of the World hiding behind excuses like that sadly recalled better times.

With Metro service--locomotives or no--already annulled, only one train was left moving. Miraculously 183, the southbound BANKERS, coming only from New York today, was reported just 15 minutes late.

Waiting became a matter of reading or strolling around--I tried to vary the order as much as possible. Outside, the snow at last began to let up, and, coincidentally it seemed, Amtrak began turning some wheels. The BANKERS, having lost another 15, got in at about 12:15, and after holding for the connecting passengers from train 609, the 12:03 to Harrisburg, left from the upper level. We also learned about this time that 170 had cleared Baltimore. Suddenly, as if I had learned nothing from the day's events (let alone previous Amtrak adventures), I began to hope for a suppertime arrival in New London.

The snow stopped. No. 170's struggles, however, were not over. Apparently making good time to Wilmington, it was then reported stalled there with "mechanical difficulties." There was still no word, meanwhile, of anything behind it. At last it left Wilmington and shortly, at about 1:10, the passengers--fewer than might be expected for the holiday, since many apparently could not get to 30th St. in the snow--were sent downstairs for its arrival. I elected to stay in the warm waiting room with my just-purchased cup of Horn & Hardart's pea soup, one of the strikingly few good decisions I would later remember making. One-thirty came and went, still with no train. The story now was that, four tracks notwithstanding, it was stuck behind a freight. Good thing, I thought, that George Washington did not have to wait for Amtrak to get him across the Delaware.

In a few minutes a pair of E44s appeared on the High Line, the elevated freight bypass west of the station, moving slowly northward with mixed tonnage, and I took this as my cue to head for the platform, where many rather displeased souls had been waiting in the cold for nearly 30 minutes. The 8-car train (7 Amfleet, one baggage) that rolled in could have been the EMPIRE BUILDER fresh from the snowslides of Stampede Pass. Snow and ice were packed around the windshields behind the protective grilles on E60CP 975, and the flanks of both locomotive and cars were similarly smeared with white.

Amcoach 21145, second car on the train, was empty, and I grabbed a window seat on the left-hand side. The car filled quickly, and soon a crewman on the p.a. urged anyone without a seat to get off and wait for the next train, presumably 172, which was "right on our backs." When I heard this, a little bell went off in my head. I ignored it. No. 170 pulled out, 4 hours 35 minutes late.

Oddly, once we left Philadelphia, everything went fairly smoothly. It was still possible in spots to look across three tracks and see no rails, but the Corridor, as if waiting for a break in the snowfall, was becoming its own flurry of activity. Less than a dozen miles out, we had met three trains (probably 191, 143, and 171), and with clear visibility were able to mai tain 60 or better much of the way to New York. Gangs were at work all along the line clearing switches with brooms and shovels.

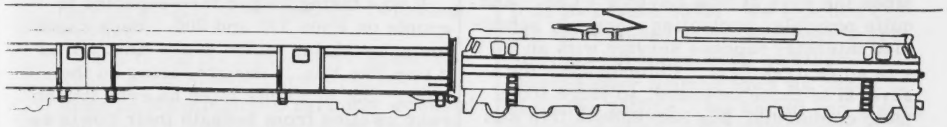
The 975 was, notably, still doing its job. Having seen and sat thru several E60 failures--some of motive power, some in the dead of spring when conditions could not have been less severe--I have often thought it would be appropriate to change the paint on one of these brick-shaped marvels from silver to gold. So far, however, I had seen none of the GG1 helpers commonly sent to rescue the big C-Cs. Clear patches appeared in the sky to the west as we crossed the Jersey meadows. We had lost only 5 more minutes between Philadelphia and Newark, and tho this was stretched to 15 by an unexplained slow, fitful passage under the Hudson, it seemed that Corridor operations were rebounding.

Nevertheless, we were to be the first train north out of Penn Station in several hours, and despite the crew's pledge to get us in and out as quickly as possible, some time was consumed exchanging passengers. Again there was an announcement that the following train had plenty of

seats and again, perhaps because of the nearly normal run from Philadelphia, I ignored the insistent little bell, the one trying to remind me of my previous luck--boarding the nonstop section of the ADIRONDACK to New York, for example, which would up slotted behind the regular section--in choosing trains. The PATRIOT would be less crowded, I would not have to sit in the smoker...

We left New York 4hrs 55mins down, diving below the East River and emerging under unexpectedly clear skies. The afternoon sun sparkled on the waters of the Hell Gate as we crested the bridge grade and an important psychological hump. Ah, yes, dinner. Let's see, what can I make?...

Heartening too was that where once we had bounced thru the Bronx on some of the worst track in the Corridor, we now skimmed easily along. Track 2, like Track 1 30 months before it, had received the last of its continuous welded rail in the fall, completing the stretch from Shell Tower, the New Rochelle junction with the



MTA's New Haven Line, to Oak Tower at the foot of the eastern Hell Gate incline. With part of the Queens approach also relaid, only the bridge and its adjoining trestles keep their old track.

I looked at my watch as we left Rye. While we were still slowly losing time--our 5hr, 1min deficit was a personal record on Amtrak, transcons and all--any urgency about the trip which had built up as I waited in Philadelphia had since subsided. The sun was still up, I would still catch some of the evening news, and... the air circulation calmly expired, soon followed by the overhead lights. "No," I said to myself, staring at the ceiling. It worked--they came back on. Another fade was equally brief. But suddenly full of doubt, I gazed out the window. We were barely moving fast enough to make the inflated 15-min interval from Rye to Stamford (most trains are allowed only 12 or 13). Perhaps, as New York's WCBS had reported one morning last week, the nearby Cos Cob generating plant was having problems. This at least was not the end of the world. The other possibility, that concerning the elaborate, 12-wheeled junction box at the head of our train, was less agreeable. We pulled up at Stamford.

I watched the reflection of the setting sun drop from floor to floor on one of Stamford's glass-sided buildings and tried not to think about how long we had been sitting in the station. Suddenly the head-end power kicked off again, and when it did not readily return, my heart capsized and sank. Supper would be a little late tonight, for GE's E-sitstill-CP, or as a friend of mine puts it, "dead-end power", had struck again. Before too long, a crewman on the p.a. was patiently explaining what a pantograph was and how on our train this particular "instrument" was not working. Whether both of 975's instruments had been tried was not discussed. There would, tho, be a delay because we were going to need another engine.

In suspiciously short order, say 15 or 20 minutes, there was a series of thumps as attempts were made to tie on the new power. Meanwhile, back on the p.a., the crew was asking all Bridgeport passengers to leave the train and take the next one, which not surprisingly after all this time was "directly behind us." We would not, they said, stop at Bridgeport. The little bell, more like an alarm this time, went off again, as if to say "third and last chance." Well, enough was enough, and my common sense knew what to do. Flee 170. Promptly. This accomplished, I was left with little to guide me except a perverse desire to stick around just to see what might happen next.

It was not long before I had second thoughts. A nearby passenger returned from outside with some discouraging words. "The engine they put on," he told his seatmate in something of a stage whisper, "can't pull the train." Indeed, for awaiting the highball, hunched rather modestly in front of the 975, was Conrail 8439, a grimy, black 600hp SW1.

This was simply a desperate attempt to unplug the line with whatever was handy since even tho it was not the usual rush hour, several trains were piling up behind us waiting to get into Stamford. But they did not really mean to take us anywhere with a yard switcher, did they?

They did. The crew announced briefly, bravely, that with the "freight engine" up

front we would still have no heat or lights. Five hundred icy, dark stares searched in vain for a target--such is the beauty of a p.a. We were also asked to stay seated if at all possible. At 5:50, five hours, 50 minutes behind, we left, crossing over immediately from track 4, the outside eastbound, to track 2 on the inside. The idea was thus to allow following trains to pass us on the right and make their station stops, possible only on track 4, while we plodded along on 2. Perhaps the passengers, who had taken most of these follies with remarkable equanimity, were not immediately aware of what was going on, or that 35mph was pretty much the top end for an SW1 with a dead E60 and 8 cars, wind and gravity permitting. The crew, after all, wishing to avoid a wholesale evacuation at Stamford, had told them essentially nothing. But they woke up fast when 172 went singing on by. "Hey, we could have taken that one," and "Why didn't they tell us?" were typical comments.

It occurred to me that I was riding behind a diesel on this line for the first time since the days of New Haven's FL9s. And quite possibly, protecting regularly scheduled intercity express service with an SW1 was an Amtrak first. Unfortunately for several of those on board, to judge from their comments, this horrendous trip was to be an Amtrak last. The nuisance and discomfort of broken-down hardware (where once rail supporters cried "old equipment" in defense, must we now plead "new equipment?"), the speedy and highly visible flow of traffic on parallel Interstate 95, and, most irritating of all, the unannounced opportunity to take a faster train, spoke none too well for Amtrak service.

Somewhat gloomily I sat back to calculate our travel time to New Haven, then tried just as quickly to forget the answers. An eastbound commuter showed us its markers. More comments. And then, 25 minutes out of Stamford, we slowed. A tough grade? No, we stopped on a right-hand curve, just short of the South Norwalk commuter platforms. News from the men in blue that we were getting still another engine was not exactly popular with the fans, but of course there was no longer anything they could do. Little happened for several minutes except another train whistling by on track 4. Second 170, said one of the trainmen. Uncoupled, 8439 drifted back toward Stamford on track 1. It was then, from the open vestibule at the forward end of 21145, that I heard the blessed, high-strung revs of an F40--no, a pair!--nosing up to our helpless consist. The cavalry had arrived!

Someone deserved my silent thanks and more than a little credit, for even assuming the SOS had been flashed from Stamford shortly after we arrived (some 85 minutes beforehand), units could scarcely have been rounded up, checked out, manned, and sent to us from New Haven, 31 miles distant, a great deal faster. Even dragging us this far with the 8439 had saved at least 20 minutes. Having yet another E60 fail, however, and leaving yet another trainload of customers in the dark (I speak from experience) were no causes for praise.

A trainman in the vestibule was waving with alarm at an approaching headlight as he shouted a warning to everyone on the ground. Train 174, horn suddenly straf-ing the air with random Morse, whipped past inches away on track 4 and disappeared to the east, his speed drawing immediate criticism from the crew. "Never should have come thru like that," said one. "He knew we were here..."

It was taking longer than expected to couple on F40s 210 and 200. Back came the word--icing on the brake line. After a trip like this, I thought, icing on the cake. But moments later an even louder roar swelled from beneath their cowls as the EMDs powered up the train. Lights and fresh air flooded back into the cars as the crew climbed aboard. Now some 6hrs, 40mins down, trailing 172, 174, and its own second section, having averaged 26mph from Philadelphia and only 23 from D.C. --but also having just cashed in 600hp for 6000--the rolling Late Show known as the MINUTE MAN again got down to business.

As promised, we ran nonstop to New Haven, arriving on track 10 just as 174 was completing its engine change on track 8. Again I could have switched trains, but there seemed little point by now. I did walk up the platform to watch as car knockers chipped the ice and snow from the couplings and the F40 duo led the crippled 975 meekly away. No doubt some among the battle-worn clientele got the jitters all over again when the lights went out, since no one on the crew had explained this one either. No. 174 was soon on its way and a pair of connecting RDCs, perhaps running as train 412, was spotted in its place. As our replacement power, F40 208, was backed down I took a deep breath, crossed my fingers, and got back on. The longer than usual swap had left the MINUTE MAN 411 minutes (this sounded better than 6hrs, 51mins) in the hole.

Operation down the home stretch to New London was smooth and sure, as it almost always is. I was out front at Union Station trying to catch a cab when 170 left town. The Conrail cash fare receipt still in my coat pocket from this morning would have to be reminder enough of this trip, for there had been no blizzard in New London, and the ice had long since melted from the sides of the train. If no longer physically resembling Amtrak Nos. 7 and 8, tho, the MINUTE BUILDER--racking up 414 extra ones on a trip carded for only 404 in the first place--had kept to schedule about as well. One, I shrugged, for the book. Beyond irritation by now, I was a little sad. With so many passenger train traditions already abandoned, I had hoped, at least on Amtrak's own Corridor where excuses like frozen steam lines and hostile BN management do not apply, to see the all-weather tradition in better shape. It could have made, not lost, some badly needed friends.

SNOW ON WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY PART TWO: WEST

by Walt Stringer

Almost everyone familiar with Amtrak knows that SP's Donner Pass is one of the toughest pieces of track in the U.S. during the winter, and one which trains 5 and 6--the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR--face on a daily basis in their Overland journey.

This being my first winter in the Bay Area, I decided to make a round trip to Reno on Washington's Birthday weekend and see if legends of yards of snow, rotaries, flangers and plows were true.

My junket included train 6 on Sunday, during a driving snowstorm, and train 5 on Monday, with a pretty day but plenty of snow and operating headaches.

Sunday's connecting bus from San Francisco was half empty as we rode over the Bay Bridge in the rain, and no. 6 waited for us at Oakland with engines 626 and 629 and cars 1029, 1572, 4499, 4864, dome 9470, 3371, 8040, 2753 "Pine Leaf", and two "Sparks coaches", 5231 and 5226, to Sparks, Nevada. Sparks cars are run each weekend, particularly this one due to the holiday and the lack of a RENO FUN TRAIN. The two Sparks cars were full, the rest of the train half-full.

We enjoyed a well-served lunch as we moved up the Bay in the rain, and we noted Amtrak's new simplified February menus, with colorful drawings on the cover but fewer entrees.

Near Roseville we met no. 5, then began to climb the high Sierra in the continuing rain. Sitting in the dome with my radio scanner, I could hear the train crew and Mountain Dispatcher, as well as freight crews. Below Colfax we heard that a flanger and ice breaker team were out, that it was snowing hard near the summit, and that two freights ahead were in trouble.

Our first delay was crossing over twice to pass a stuck eastbound freight lead by engine 9393. We reached Colfax and stopped at the Amshack there at 3:50, but there were no takers. Shortly after leaving town we began to see snow falling. We had to run around another freight at Gold Run, with engine 9011 leading the eastbound tonnage. A timer on a signal at the end of the siding caused us further delay. At 4:55 we passed Blue Canyon, with snow swirling and nearly a foot on the ground--a very beautiful scene. While the rails were barely visible, our ZEPHYR kept right on going. At Emigrant Gap we ran beside Interstate 80 for a mile--everyone had chains and headlights on, traffic was slow and heavy, with some autos in the ditch already. At 5:20, with much deeper snow, the storm still raging, we passed the snow train with SD9 4317 (ice breaker-equipped) and another SD9 pulling the flanger.

We continued steadily on, barely bothered by all the snow. On the radio, just the usual about draggers and "barber poles". We made the usual brake test at Soda Springs, then moved into Norden, where numerous people were seen around the operator's station and turntable area. At this point the storm was at its worst--several feet on the ground and falling wildly--but we never so much as slowed down.

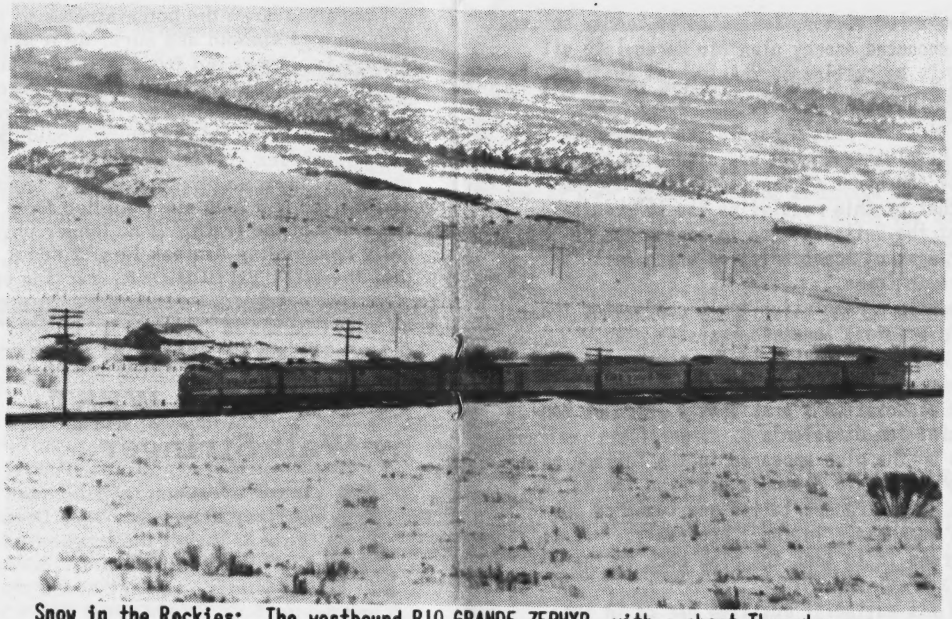
As we started down the east side of the mountains I heard Extra 8934 east call for help after tripping a dragger. Our crew tried to keep in radio contact with him. The passengers in the dome and elsewhere were thrilled at the storm and everyone had a few comments about getting stuck up there.

The east side was less stormy. We double-stopped at Truckee at 6:20--with the town beautifully illuminated in the snow. About 30 got off for ski trips.

I enjoyed a good prime rib dinner on the way down into Reno, and we arrived at 7:18, just 35 minutes late. About 100 detrained and were greeted by clear skies and 50-degree air. I turned in my stub at the Sahara for $12.50 worth of freebies (you don't have to stay there to do so), then headed into town for some activity. A late-night check of next day's train 5 showed it 4 hours late from Rock Springs WY on the UP.

The next morning it was 3:24 late out of Ogden, and by noon about 100 folks were on hand awaiting its arrival, which finally took place at 12:50 (4 hours late).

The consist was engines 620 & 598, and cars 1242, 1590, 4443, 4828, dome 9458 "Silver Brand", 3339, 8094, 2757 "Palm Star", 2629 "Pacific Ridge", our two Sparks coaches, and a Sierra Pacific private car, formerly Amtrak 7507, chartered by Great Western Tours.



Snow in the Rockies: The westbound RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, with a short Thursday consist, runs thru the snow near Dotsero CO on Mar 8. Photo by Paul Rayton.

We loaded up and took off. The sun was out and the scenery was beautiful, tho the dome was a little warm. At Truckee 25 got off at 1:50, and as we neared Norden again the snow deepened. Many animal tracks were visible. At Shed 47 we crossed over to the low grade line, which put us thru the 2 1/2-mile tunnel to Norden, rather than the more scenic route over the summit. Coming out at Norden, we saw that the world had changed--snowing, frigid cold, a freight broken in two, 4-5 feet on the ground at this 7000-ft elevation. From Norden all the way down to Colfax only one track was open, the other completely buried and unusable. The snow piled by the right-of-way was up to the train windows. It was a sight of beauty, but also enough to frighten you. At various places like Emigrant Gap we found ground crews in heavy gear clearing switches.

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Dinner (from the lunch menu) was good and the nighttime scenery pleasant as we rolled down the bay, with final arrival at Oakland at 7:45 (3:15 late). The bus was a little late and well-filled, and after a short wait at the Transbay Terminal in San Francisco, a Muni PCC streetcar picked me up and delivered me to the door on Taraval Street just a short hop later. It was a fine trip and a good look at how a railroad handles a tough storm. Now--when do they bring the rotaries out? I'm going again.

Amtrak SAVING

In the time since our last issue appeared, there has been, according to Washington sources, a steady shift in opinion toward rejection of the DOT plan to cut back the Amtrak system. The DOT's support in Congress appears to be eroding steadily. In the Senate, the scene is brighter now than it was before. "The DOT can't pick up any more votes" said a source. Time is on the side of Amtrak system supporters--the more time before a vote is taken, the more likely the rejection move will have gained support. Some Congressmen and Senators who were previously supporting the DOT plan or were on the fence are now opposing it. For example, Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia is now opposing it. A big obstacle to total rejection of the plan is, according to system supporters, Congressman Florio of New Jersey, who favors accepting the plan with only the addition of the MONTREALER and the CRESCENT.

One of the noisiest reactions against the cutback plan is coming from Idaho and supporters of the threatened PIONEER. The dropping of the SOUTHWEST LIMITED has been protested by Indian tribes in Arizona, and Barry Goldwater there is opposing the cutback. In southeastern Colorado there is a big campaign on to save the SOUTHWEST LIMITED--a campaign composed more of citizen groups and businessmen than traditional rail supporters. The Congressmen in that area are saying that the DOT plan is the number one subject in letters that they are now receiving.

The state of Kansas is slowly gaining momentum in this battle. When the news came out just after Easter of the big surge in advance Amtrak bookings (up 40% above last year), Kansas was the number one state in inquiries to Amtrak's Public Affairs Department about the story.

In Michigan, apparently every newspaper is editorially opposed to the Amtrak cutbacks, even tho the state would lose no service under the plan and in fact would gain LAKE SHORE LIMITED service.

National Association of RR Passengers officials in California early in April urged members to contact their Senators and Congressmen ("While claiming to maintain rail service to much of the nation, the skimpy financing proposals of the DOT plan would prevent Amtrak from increasing frequencies. Capital funding for new equipment is too low, and Amtrak would not have sufficient equipment to handle peak travel demands. On top of this, DOT wants Amtrak to raise fares to cover 50% of all costs--an expectation not required of federally supported highway or airline transportation.").

The New York region of NARP expressed shock and dismay that the NY State DOT endorsed the cutback plan and called on the state to reconsider. However, state Transportation Commissioner William C. Hennessy reiterated his support for the plan, stating his belief that if many long distance routes were kept, it would be at the expense of frequency reductions on New York's Empire Service. But NARP members disagreed; Chairman Stephen Linde of Manhattan pointed out, "New Yorkers realize all too well that once you start cutting a rail system, the nibbling process begins."

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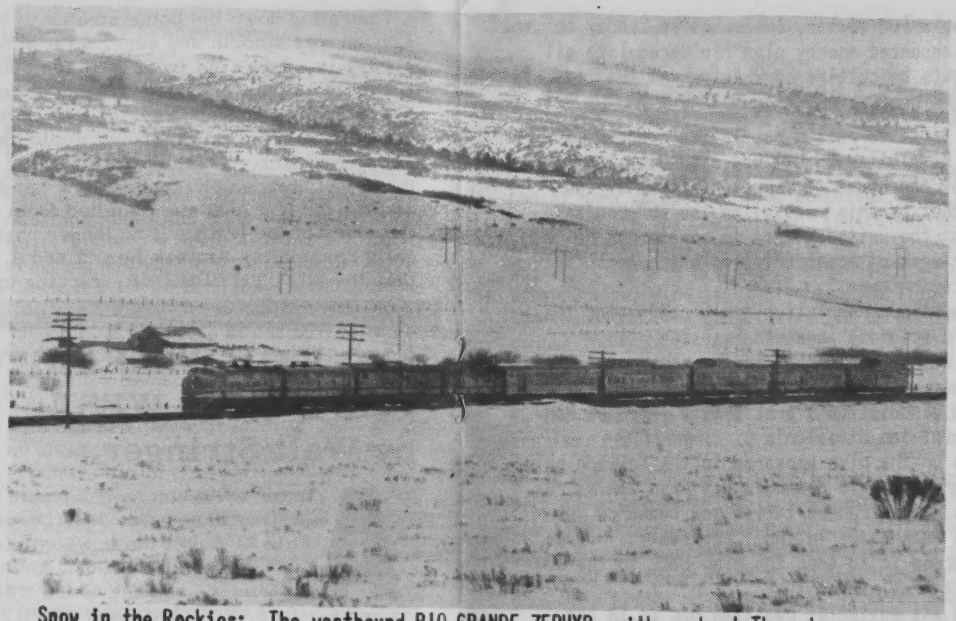

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Another New Yorker, the New York Times's Tom Wicker, in an Easter Sunday column criticized President Carter's recently announced energy plan (to deregulate oil prices) and noted that it is unrealistic to be cutting back Amtrak at the time of an impending fuel shortage (see QUOTES OF THE WEEK, p. 20).

The State of Texas may have been the first to pass a resolution condemning the DOT cutback plan. House Concurrent Resolution No. 71 was signed by the Governor of Texas on Mar 28: "Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, the Senate concurring, that by this resolution the 66th Legislature hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to oppose the recommendations of the United States Department of Transportation which call for the curtailing of passenger train service in Texas."

Three California state Senators introduced a resolution Apr 6 condemning the DOT plan and supporting instead the DOT's original Scenario E system plan.

The Illinois ARP on Apr 11 warned of an "energy peril" in the proposed Amtrak cuts. The plan "might have made sense back in the days of abundant 30-cents-per-gallon gasoline, but not today" said the association's president J. Michael Morrison. He called the DOT plan a "blueprint for disaster".

One of the most persuasive editorials on the plan appeared in the Philadelphia Inquirer on Apr 5, under the title "Congress should demand a new plan for Amtrak." The newspaper said that "Hearings by the House Transportation and Commerce Subcommittee have shed new light on serious weaknesses in the...proposal... It is increasingly clear that the duty of Congress is to send the plan back to the Department of Transportation for substantial revision."

The Nampa (Idaho) Free Press reversed its editorial position Mar 22 in the light of the fuel shortage and wrote: "We are beginning to believe we were too hasty when we editorialized last month that it might be in line with our belief that government has to be cut back that Amtrak's PIONEER passenger train should be axed." The paper concluded, "The dollars spent on passenger trains now are going to pay us back later with perhaps what will turn out to be the vital guts of our transportation system."

The California Dept. of Transportation held hearings on the DOT plan in Los Angeles, Fresno, and Fullerton on Apr 3 and 4. Rail supporter Houston Allred told the L.A. hearing "There are literally millions of Americans from upper, middle, and lower income groups who now have the purchasing power and the inclination to travel by train if they had the assurances that train travel is once again reliable..." He noted, "As my wife says, 'So many people fly because they're afraid they're going to miss something; and, of course, they do.'"

NARP's Ross Capon told a House subcommittee on Apr 3 that "We are dismayed that DOT has been so effective in peddling to Congress the myth that drastic service reductions lead to service improvements. In fact, DOT itself has testified that unit costs would rise under its plan, since many overhead costs would not be reduced or would not decline in proportion to the decline in earning capability."

Little Rock rail supporter Randall Cookus wrote to the Washington Star in mid-April: "The 'real world' of Secretary Adams is not the real world of 1979. It is Fiscal Year 1977 on which the DOT analysis is based. If Mr. Adams would look around, he might see the 'real world.' It has gasoline approaching $1 a gallon, long lines at gasoline stations, many stations closed on Sundays, and heavy ridership gains on Amtrak during the past four months."

California State Senator and Amtrak Board member James Mills complained in the L.A. Times on Apr 13: "Only the most energy-extravagant and dollar-expensive modes of transportation are generously treated (by government). Amtrak, which is cheaper both in dollar and energy costs per passenger, is due for early retirement."

Eleven New England senators in early March sent Secretary Adams a demand that the MONTREALER be retained in the Amtrak system.

As of Apr 5 we had in our files a stack of 70 newspaper editorials which condemned the Amtrak cutback, and more have been appearing since then.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK METROLINER #111 (the 11:30am NY departure) struck a 32-ton switch tamper at work on the Corridor at Edison NJ at 12:08pm on Apr 20. Of the 197 passengers aboard the "Metroliner" (which was actually a consist of a G61 locomotive and 5 Amfleet cars and a parlor car), 71 had non-serious injuries. One passenger was admitted to a hospital. Passengers were bused on to other stations to catch other trains. The locomotive and the first car derailed but remained upright, and the locomotive caught fire and burned for 15 minutes before local firemen doused the blaze. Three workmen on the 65-foot long tamper jumped to safety and received minor injuries. The engineer saw the tamper ahead of him and slowed the train by emergency braking. The speed at collision was not known. The four tracks in the area were closed from 12:08 until 2:35, when two were opened for 15mph operation, resulting in 20-minute delays by rush hour.....

* * *

AMTRAK METROLINER #120 suffered an electrical fire under its last car at Metropark NJ on Apr 22. The fire was put out by 8:05pm, and the train continued to New York after a 1½-hour delay..... FLOODS IN MISSISSIPPI severed the PANAMA LIMITED route beginning Apr 13 and lasting at least until Apr 16. Amtrak bused passengers between Memphis and New Orleans..... ICG FREIGHT TRAIN derailed and damaged a bridge at Atlanta IL, 19 miles south of Bloomington, severing Amtrak service between Bloomington and Springfield IL on Apr 12 and for several days including the Easter weekend. Amtrak bused passengers to bypass the closed line.....

THE BOISE STATESMAN in an Apr 9 editorial entitled "Rot" called DOT Secretary Adams a "liar" for telling Congress that Amtrak is a fuel waster. The newspaper said that Adams was trying to "slander and undermine" Amtrak.....

RTN'S PETER BRETZ got his first look at operational Superliner cars when in Chicago a few weeks ago. In a brief interval between trains 49 and 5 he looked into the ILLINOIS ZEPHYR (the ILLINI was also Superliner-equipped alongside it) and reports a "feeling of spaciousness." He tried a seat and pulled down the tray. The seats are similar to Amfleet seats, he said, but seem roomier. "There is a big, black knob near the reclining lever, which allows one to lower the leg rest without raising it up full--a nice design improvement." He found the stairway to the upper deck wider than on the Santa Fe hi-level cars ("I didn't bump my shoulder going up."). But he added, "Paint is already peeling from one coach, and did I spot a fogged window?".....

THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR'S "would be" 30th birthday was celebrated on Mar 20. The famous train began operation on Mar 20, 1949, and made its last run on Mar 22, 1970. The closest approximation to the original is now the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR between Salt Lake City and Denver--the only remaining privately-operated long distance passenger train in the U.S. The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR's leg between Denver and Chicago is the same route as the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR's.....

DOT SECRETARY ADAMS was back in his home state of Washington late in March, where he is not particularly revered now because he wants to drop most of the state's Amtrak trains. In Seattle he exhibited a specially-designed safe automobile ("his true love," quips one wag) that the DOT is spending $6 million to develop, since Detroit seems incapable of doing so. The Tri-City Herald reported that while Adams was lecturing Tri-City citizens on saving gasoline and obeying the speed limit, his 16-year-old daughter, at a table with local students, was "regaling them with stories of a friend who can do 100mph in his Corvette".....

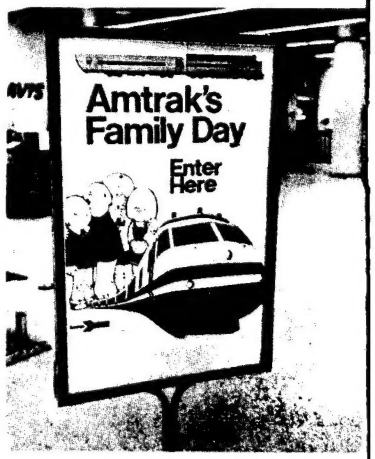
THE SAN JOAQUIN should have its schedule radically changed, Caltrans told Amtrak on Apr 13. The state's proposed schedule would have the train leave northbound from Bakersfield at 6:05am and reach San Francisco at 1pm; southbound it

would leave San Francisco at 5:30pm and reach Bakersfield at 12:30am. If Amtrak re-schedules the train, Caltrans said, "we are prepared to undertake an aggressive marketing program similar to our efforts used in promoting the highly successful SAN DIEGANS." A big citizen rally and demonstration in favor of retaining the SAN JOAQUIN was held at the Fresno Amtrak station on Apr 10. Marchers with placards chanted "One, two, three, four, don't cut Amtrak any more". A list of 0,000 signatures favoring keeping the train was presented to public officials.....

WHY THE INCREASE in Amtrak reservations (up 40% in recent weeks)? An Amtrak spokesman said that the United Airlines strike accounts for an estimated 15% of the 40% increase, and the rest is probably due to four factors: (1) poor availability of gasoline; (2) Amtrak excursion fares and a "modest" advertising program now in progress; (3) strong pushing of Amtrak tours ("bookings are out of this world"); and (4) airline deregulation. How does airline deregulation help Amtrak business? Because of deregulation, there are now 184 air fields in the lower 48 states with some form of reduced service (for example, substitution flights using small planes which the public finds less satisfactory). Of these air fields, 105 are within 50 miles of an Amtrak stop. Thus Amtrak believes deregulation is helping it, tho it cannot say precisely how much. Incidentally, heavy bookings began about March 15, 16 days before the United Airlines strike, and they include the SUNSET LIMITED route, which has no competing UAL service, so it seems that the strike cannot account for the entire increase in Amtrak reservations.....

* * *

INCREASED FUEL PRICES will cost Amtrak about $4-5 million extra in fiscal 79, the corporation has estimated..... AMTRAK'S BOARD MEETING in late April will consider, among other matters, the question of carrying fuel tenders on Amtrak trains to avoid refueling at some locations. Up to now the tender program has been experimental on a few trains, and an Amtrak spokesman said it's been a big success..... AN EQUIPMENT EXHIBIT will be held at the Los Angeles station May 5-6, celebrating the station's 40th anniversary. On the fifth, the "Fiesta Rail 79" events will include at 10:30am a ceremony featuring Senator James Mills, Amtrak's Alan Boyd, Caltrans's Adriana Gianturco, and perhaps Gov. Edmund Brown. At 12:30 a special train to San Bernardino will depart. The equipment display, open 9-9 on Saturday and 9-5 Sunday, will include 2 locomotives, a diner, sleeper and lounge, 2 Amtrak technical cars, an Amcoach, a hi-level car, a Superliner car, and a Budd SPV-2000 railcar. There will be a continuous film of opening-day ceremonies. A similar equipment exhibit at Amtrak's "Family Day" in Washington Union Station on Feb 24-25 (Amtrak photo at right) was deemed highly successful. Government officials attended the first day, and Amtrak employees and the general public came the second. Over 6000 attended despite rainy weather.....



THE "TIME EXPRESS" TV show will have its first airing on Apr 26, a change in schedule. Our cover last issue pictured the gold-painted Amtrak engine that appears in the series. The "Supertrain" TV program, generally viewed as a flop, has been rescheduled to Saturday nights, with changes in production, cast and script. The first episode we viewed seemed about as bad as the earlier ones..... THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR'S improvement project director, Louis Thompson, told a Congressional subcommittee this month that if Congress decides to cut back funds for the project--the latest cost estimate is $2.4 billion, up $632 million from last year's estimate--the DOT has a "hit list" of items that can be cut from the budget--primarily $214 million in station improvements.....

PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL SERVICE was suspended Apr 6 by derailment of a CP Rail coal train en route to Roberts Bank on joint BN track between the border and New Westminster. Passengers were bused while the Amfleet equipment was stranded in Vancouver, B.C..... WE ARE HEARING that Amtrak will make a valiant effort to keep the COAST STARLIGHT at the 18-car limit for the 1979 summer season despite the possibility of its being cut to 12 cars by the endemic equipment shortage. Seattle-Chicago trains are to be kept at 11-12-car lengths, with 4 coaches and 2 sleepers standard on all runs. We do not expect any Superliner cars in service during the summer on these routes..... THE SEATTLE-PORTLAND double track main line was closed early on Apr 15 when a Milwaukee Road freight collided head-on with a Union Pacific freight at about 10mph on CTC-controlled track north of Vancouver, Wash. There were no fatalities, and damage was light. Amtrak trains were delayed. An investigation has been set to probe why "fail-safe" CTC equipment did not prevent the "cornfield" meet..... LUNCH COUNTER LOUNGE cars, ex-NP "Travellers Rest" and ex-GN "Ranch" cars, continue to substitute for lounges and diners on the EMPIRE BUILDER and NORTH COAST HIAWATHA runs. The car shortage has been intensified by the Mar 28 derailment of the EMPIRE BUILDER near Havre, Montana.....

* * *

NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD, the SP subsidiary, said Mar 27 that the costs of its rebuilding of Tunnel 27 at Island Mountain CA are now estimated at $12 million, or double the original estimate, and the time required to complete the job is three times the original estimate. Work began in December and is now expected to be completed in September, SP said. SP again raised the threat of possible abandonment of the line. Rail observers do not expect SP to abandon the NWP, and view the announcement as a plea for government assistance in the massive repair. And the idea of using the NWP as a passenger line has arisen again, with San Francisco Supervisor Quentin Kopp on Apr 13 telling Golden Gate Transit that it should study the possibility of leasing the line to carry passengers to its ferry terminal in Larkspur CA, across the bay from San Francisco..... RTN'S LAST ISSUE Slip of the Month Club item was brought about by a typesetting error, not a spelling error in Pete Roehm's manuscript..... FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION and the NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION this month held two public hearings on the proposed use of CB radios by commercial bus drivers..... THE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN supported by Caltrans to promote the SAN DIEGAN trains includes current newspaper ads showing a businessman commuter seated in an Amfleet car, with the caption "I'm going to work on the railroad!"..... THE DALLAS ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers has published its first newsletter issue. The address is PO Box 50074, Main Place Station, Dallas TX 75250..... AMERICAN BUS RIDERSHIP dropped 8½% in 1978, for the nation's ten largest intercity bus companies, reports the ICC..... THE ALASKA RAILROAD may have as much as 70% of its land taken away due to Indian claims. Alaska Magazine said the federally-owned railroad could be reduced to only a 200-fot wide right of way plus land currently leased to others..... MEXICO CITY STREETCARS are being phased out, to be replaced by trolley buses. Streetcar catenary removal there began in late February..... AMTRAK SUPERLINER CARS began running on the ILLINI on Apr 3, for an indefinite period of time. RTN's Jack Ferry photographed the first runs of the Superliner cars in February and rushed the undeveloped film to us by first class mail. About two months later, the film has never arrived, apparently lost by the Postal Service..... CHINA'S FIRST EXPRESS train to Hong Kong in 30 years ran the 3-hour trip from Canton on Apr 4..... THE COAST STARLIGHT was running late into L.A. on Apr 5, and passengers connecting to the SOUTHWEST LIMITED were bused from Glendale to Pasadena (a standard procedure in such cases); but this time the bus conked out with a dead battery on a freeway onramp. A substitute bus arrived 45mins later and took passengers to San Bernardino, where the SOUTHWEST LIMITED was held 20mins beyond departure time for them.....

SUNSET MAGAZINE'S JUNE issue will carry a 2-page article on rail travel in the West, with a 2-color map highlighting the most scenic parts of Western routes.....

THE INDIAN-PACIFIC, an Australian train that runs between the two oceans in its name, is the subject of the lead article in the April issue of Gourmet magazine (one of our very favorite magazines). There are four color photos of the train--an aerial view and three interior shots, all apparently railroad photos. Author Richard Condon waxes eloquent over the train's lavish menu. Gourmet's address is 777 Third Ave., New York NY 10017..... AMTRAK REPORTED RESULTS on Apr 9 of its tests of the improved Turbo engine, the French-built Turmo XII. Robert H. Seemann, Amtrak manager of Turbo equipment, said the new engine gives a 25-29% improvement in fuel economy. Amtrak said one Turmo XII engine was able to replace two standard Turmo III engines and use less fuel. Tests have been run on the engine on the Chicago-Milwaukee route, and will continue there and on the Chicago-Detroit and Chicago-Port Huron runs..... AMTRAK'S RAIL EXPRESS rates will be increased 10% as of Apr 29, Amtrak announced this month..... AMTRAK PRESIDENT BOYD told Congress on Mar 21 that after 8 months as president he is convinced that Amtrak could not save significant amounts of money by more prudent management practices, contrary to the beliefs of some. Boyd gave the following breakdown of money spent in Amtrak operations in fiscal 78: operating trains $350 million (39%); maintaining equipment and facilities $299 million (34%); operating stations $69 million (8%); marketing and reservations $45 million (5%); interest, taxes, etc. $105 million (12%); and general management $22 million (2%).....

* * *

DOT MISREPRESENTS AMTRAK'S losses to Congress by vast amounts, complain rail supporters. DOT does this by quoting Fully Allocated Loss figures for various routes, when the Avoidable Loss figures should be used in determining how much would be "saved" by eliminating a particular route. For instance, DOT aides told Congressmen that the BLUE RIDGE "lost" $1.3 million last year--the Fully Allocated Loss figure which is inappropriate because it wouldn't all disappear if the train were dropped. The actual Avoidable Loss figure was only $306,000. Other instances are as follows, with the DOT figure first and the Avoidable Loss figure second: Seattle-Portland local trains $2 million, $802,000; Chicago-Florida $20 million, $11.4 million; Chicago-Houston $17 million, $9.5 million; Chicago-Los Angeles $28 million, $13 million; NATIONAL LIMITED $18 million, $8.7 million; PIONEER $7.5 million, $4.3 million; MONTREALER $11.4 million, $3.6 million.....

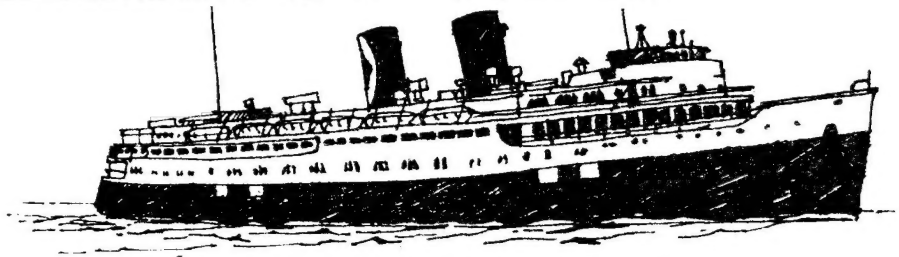
OUR LAST ISSUE mentioned a night-time meeting of the Amtrak board described by Dan Monaghan in the Clearance Card. Dr. Monaghan calls attention to the fact that he did not state that Brock Adams was actually present at that affair. The implication more obviously was that the meeting was inspired by Adams.....

TORONTO TRAVEL AGENT has arranged a nine-day "Show Train" excursion across Canada, with entertainment such as ballet, open-air theater and the Calgary Stampede during stopovers in cities, and nightly entertainment aboard the train. On board the train, shows consist of one-act plays and skits given by casts of two to five. There are other gourmet amenities aboard the train. A novel idea, dreamed up by Sam Blyth & Co., 93 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1M1, Canada.....

* * *

THE MILWAUKEE ROAD'S receiver has requested that 7400 miles of track be abandoned May 8, with the railroad's operations reduced to 2400 miles. Chicago to Montevideo MN would be the primary portion remaining. Seattle lawyer Fred Simpson, who has organized SORE (Save Our Railroad Employment) fights the abandonments. UP says it might wish to buy the track west of Butte MT..... THE PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL and the MOUNT RAINIER might get Superliner equipment about May 15, comes a strong rumor as we go to press..... AMTRAK IS EXPECTED to put another 25 cars up for sale in Los Angeles in May..... CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION member Norton Simon, the wealthy industrialist, at the Mar 23 meeting voiced opposition to the proposed Sacramento-L.A. overnight train, saying he was inclined against all long distance trains. Assemblyman Walter Ingalls agreed with him..... News in this issue is updated thru Apr 23, 1979. Last issue was mailed Apr 4.

PLEASE HELP SAVE THE PRINCESS SHIPS!



Admiral John B. Hayes, commandant of the Coast Guard in Washington DC, recently refused to grant an exemption for holding-tank requirements for the "Princess Patricia" and the "Princess Marguerite". Unless overruled, this may cause both vessels to be prematurely retired at the end of the 1979 season.

The holding-tank legislation for saltwater ships is highly questionable, and brings the environmentalist movement into disrepute. Admiral Hayes can be overruled by Sec. of Transportation Brock Adams, Washington DC 20590; or by a specific act of Congress, which previously has "saved" the "Delta Queen" on the Mississippi River.

Please address a short card to Sec. Adams, and to your Congressman, asking that "Princess Patricia" and "Princess Marguerite" be exempted.

AD SPONSORED BY GLENN LEE - 101 W. OLYMPIC PL. #803, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98119

CARS & CONSISTS

*UP/AMTRAK/DOT special train Kansas City-L.A. via Denver for DOT re-route proposal of the SOUTHWEST LTD over the UP, at Kansas City Apr 2: (all UP equipment)engines 954, 960 (E9As); cars 202 "Pacific Domain" (staff car), bus. car "Arden", bus. car 103, staff car "Wyoming", bus car 114, engine 99 (GP) yard transfer engine to Kansas City from UP.

*RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, train 17, Denver Mar 17 (30th Anniv. of CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR): (all D&RGW equipment) engines 5771 (F9A), 5763 (F9B), 253 (S1G), 5762 (F9B); cars 1231, "Silver Aspen", "S. Pine", "S. Colt", "S. Bronco", "S. Pony", "S. Mustang", "S. Banquet", "S. Sky". D&RGW ski train, same: engines 3082 (GP40), 3123 (GP40), 251 (S1G); cars 1230, 1011, 1015, 1014, 1018, 1013, 1016, 1012, 1017.

*RENO FUN TRAIN (last of season) ar. Oakland Apr 8: engines 239 (F40PHR), 530 (SDP40F), 493 (FP7), 492 (FP7, shown on last issue's cover, now in Amtrak paint); cars 5665, 6035, number unknown, 5226, 5231, 5601, 5606, 3500, 5230, 5666, 5668, 5685, 5667, 5603, dome observation 9310. (492 & 493 formerly numbered Atk 377, 378.)

*Heart of Dixie RR Club excursion Birmingham-Chattanooga Apr 7&8 (all SR unless noted): engines Royal Hudson 2839 relettered Southern, water tank 50; cars 726, 662, 660, 661, 1042, 1043, HOD 2202 dome coach, HOD 4527 bag/commissary, 1067, 1068, 1081, 1086, 3659, Roanoke NRHS 1204 "George H. Kelch", 1056 "Lookout Mountain".

*SHENANDOAH, train 32, Cincinnati, Mar 28: engine 267 (F40PHR); cars 20002 Amcafe, 22900 Amcoach with two economy sleeping rooms.

*CRESCENT, train 19, Atlanta Apr 11-12: engines SR 6909, 6907, 6911 (E's); cars (all Atk nos.) 1523, 5291, 5296, 5277, 5298, 5284, 3855, 8381, 3201 "Woodland Stream", 2852 "Flint River", 2859 "Tiger River", deadhead 8383. Train 20, Washington Apr 12: (all Atk nos.) engines 408, 425, 417; cars 1406, 5663, 5267, 5803, 5463, 3850, 8382, 3203 "Crystal Stream", 2014 "Shenandoah River", 2850, 2625 "Pacific Peak" (from L.A.), SR office cars 5 & 2.

*SAN JOAQUIN, train 711, Bakersfield Apr 11: engine 530 (SDP40F); cars 5667, 5685, 3339, 5668, 5666. Same Apr 13: engine 203 (F40); cars 5667, 5685, 5668, 6452, dome observation 9310.

*SR sleeper "Warrior River" has run on the COAST STARLIGHT, first seen Mar 12.
*SR engines 6903, 6908, 6913 & 6914 were withdrawn from the Amtrak CRESCENT and were being returned to Atlanta this month with various mechanical faults. SR 6916 is receiving ex ensive front end repairs in New Orleans, from collision.
*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Apr 6: engines 507, 536; cars 1229, DH 9222, 1102, 1502, 9928, 9940, 9974, 9980, 9914, 2212, 2616, dome obs. 9251.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Jun 3: Entire Lamoille Valley RR--Swanton to St. Johnsbury VT; 150-seat limit. $30 one way (return bus available at extra fare). Boston NRHS--Mass. Bay RRE Joint Trip Committee, PO Box 61, Needham Heights MA 02194.

Oct 13: UP 8444 steam loco special Denver-Sterling CO RT. Photostops, railfan amenities. $42 adult. Bob Brown, Intermountain Chap., NRHS, PO Box 5181, Denver CO 80217. Include #10 size SASE. (Originally scheduled to Laramie WY.)

May 5: CN 6060 steam loco, Montreal-Riviere-a-Pierre RT. Runpasts. $29.90, kids $14.90. Check to VIA Rail Canada, c/o St. Lawrence Valley Rwy Society, PO Box 400, Cote des Neiges, Montreal H3S 2S7, Canada. (Send money order only.)

May 12: CN 6060 steam loco, Montreal-Ottawa RT. Photostops. Ottawa museum tour. $19.90, kids $7.90. Money order to VIA Rail Canada, c/o address above.

May 25-29: Colorado River-Lake Powell adventure; one-day float trip, all-day boat trip; SOUTHWEST LTD, etc. Roomette $325 & up. Info: Let's Travel Tours, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. 714-787-8350.

Jun 16: Toronto-Sarnia RT in private car "Cape Race". Incl meals cooked aboard, 6hrs in Sarnia. $55, under 13 $30. Upper Canada Rwy Society, Box 42, Station D, Scarborough, Ontario M1R 4Y7 Canada. Lv Toronto 8:50am, return 10pm.

Apr 28, 29, May 1, 5, Jun 10, 23: 1-day excursions Clinchfield RR. Apr 28&29, Dogwood Special, Spartanburg SC-Erwin TN RT. Info: William Cannon, Clinchfield RR, 204 Calvert Ave, Clinton SC 29325.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to: Rail Travel News, Fantrips Dept., PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"In neither energy speech nor news conference did Mr. Carter even hint that he and his budget Scrooges might spare what remains of the national railroad passenger system from the ruinous cuts they will impose on it unless Congress votes against the plan by mid-May. In the midst of a real energy crisis, the most energy-efficient means of public transportation (measured by potential, not by the current reality) is to be castrated in order to save about $300 million a year--despite the warning of Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams that if intercity automobile traffic had to be reduced by even 5 percent, the entire public transportation system would be incapable of absorbing the displaced passengers.

"Realistic leadership would be calling for a vastly improved rail network (with a potential of 500 passenger-miles per gallon of fuel)--particularly since Amtrak, despite the handicaps imposed on it by successive Administrations, Congress, and the private railroads, actually has been increasing its ridership..."

--Tom Wicker in New York Times, April 15.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"Specifically, the federal proposal calls for cutting the "San Joaquin" route from Bakersfield to Oakland, combining the San Francisco "Zephyr" and the "Sunset Limited" into one train and making no track or facility improvements."

--Associated Press news release, April 18.

(Chicago to New Orleans via Oakland is too circuitous.)

RAILROAD SHOW!

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—Sponsored by the National Association of Timetable Collectors—

Sunday, May 20 • 10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Ramada Inn - Route 5 - North Haven, Conn.

(Washington Avenue — Exit 12 on I-91)

BOOKS

The 40th anniversary of the opening of Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal occurs on May 3, 1979, and the publication of "The Last of the Great Stations" is both timely and appropriate. This 110-page 11x8½ volume (published by Interurbans, PO Box 6444, Glendale CA 91205; $9.95 plus 75¢ postage, & tax in Calif.) will delight the passenger train lover and the historian. Just about everything one would want to know about this famous station is here, including handsome photos of the trains that used it, from the beginning to the present, and sample timetables (in 1950, 62 trains daily used LAUPT), along with many station photos.

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BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94709

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EXPRESS ADS

LOW RATES on Amtrak excursion and USA Rail Pass expire May 25th. Purchase by May 25th, but travel as late as July 7th. Reserve through the RAIL experts, LET'S TRAVEL TOURS, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. Phone 714-787-9350.

RTN would like to obtain a copy of the Jan 1979 issue of Railroad magazine, the last issue of that publication. RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS continue on the next page.

TRAINS!!! We know them!!! We ride them!!! We sell train tickets!!! Call us for tickets and reservations for your next trip!!! GREAT WESTERN TOURS, 639 Market St., Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994. P.S. We sell air tickets, too. Shh!!!

TIMETABLES - Public & Employee New list monthly. SSAE for latest list. Compendium of AMTRAK timetables, 50¢. CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy items.

FREE LEAFLETS on Transport 2000 Canada, on freight trains and the environment, and current railway timetable "fliers." Write to: Membership Services, TRANSPORT 2000 CANADA, Box 300, Terminal A, Ottawa, K1N 8V3, Canada.

SAVINGS ON YOUR DOLLAR: In Canada your American dollar is worth $1.13. Change your money here to get full value. Start bothering VIA now for spring and summer reservations for Canadian Rail Travel. You won't regret your decision, and you'll save money. TRANSPORT 2000, Box 300, Terminal A, Ottawa, K1N 8V3.

JOIN THE FANTASTIC NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TIMETABLE COLLECTORS. Only $12 brings you two regularly issued publications plus many more surprises. Memberships and applications plus sample publications: Tom Coval, Membership Director, 21 E. Robin Road, Holland PA 18966.

THREE 1979 RAILFAN FUN-TRIPS--May 10-25 MEXICO including Copper Canyon, Mexico City, street cars, subway, and private cars MISTLETOE & SOONERLAND--July 19-29 MISSISSIPPI QUEEN river cruise St. Louis to Cincinnati including Transport Museum & AMTRAK Beech Grove shop--Sept 25 to Oct 7 NEW ENGLAND foliage trip including Edaville Railroad, Mt. Washington Cog, Steamtown, & Seashore Trolley Museum. Basic travel by train--join anywhere using AMTRAK connections. For complete brochures and rates, call or write MIDWEST TRAVEL SERVICE, Howard B. Thornton, Director, 2936R Bella Vista, Midwest City, Oklahoma, 73110--405-732-0566.

TROLLEY TRAILS Books: Volumes 1 - Yakima, 2-Seattle, 3-Portland, 4-Tacoma/Spokane /Bellingham, 5-Montana/Utah. $3 each, prepaid in U.S. Moneyback guarantee. Wilson Brothers Publications, Box 712-RTN, Yakima WA 98907.

Denver & Salt Lake: Pike's Peak; Salt Lake & Utah uniform button blazer sets, 2 large, 4 small $2.95 postpaid. Joseph Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen MA 01844.

Up-to-date AMTRAK LAW/$8/Robert J. Swan/Box 1866/Long Beach CA 90801.

ATTENTION U.S.A. RAILPASS TRAVELERS--Ex-Amtrak employee tells how you can reserve sleeping accommodations when using the Pass without waiting 'til last minute. A must if you're planning a Railpass excursion--don't sit in a coach when you can take Amtrak lying down. Send $3.95 for copyrighted narrative, "The Sting," for the inside story. PGN, Inc., Dept. P-74, 323 Franklin, Suite 804, Chicago IL 60606.

BEARCAT SCANNER SALE Model 250 reduced from $399 to $319.00, model 210 from $399 to $219.00, model 4-6 hand held, regular $619, now $139.00. All include UPS shipping. Add 6% California sales tax. Visa/Master Charge accepted. LET'S TRAVEL, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. Phone 714-787-8350.

COAST STARLIGHT guide book "from your window": a detailed route description for the traveler between Oakland and Los Angeles. Includes maps and drawings of views seen from the train window. $2.50 includes tax and shipping in padded mailer. LET'S TRAVEL TOURS, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

AMTRAK:
VIA RAIL CANADA:
I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR YOU.

With the Pullman Superliner fiasco continuing into the distant future, it is imperative to electrify the existing Budd passenger cars to ease the shortage of reliable equipment. Also, why build new single-level cars for the Eastern trains when the existing Budd carbodies are still in near-new condition? Since clearances on Eastern railroads limit the size of passenger cars, the new single-level cars would be little different from the existing equipment. With the Superliner cars costing between $800,000 and $900,000 each, that same amount of money could convert 9 or 10 existing cars to head end power, using Amtrak's conversion estimate of $90,000 per car (which is much too high!).

Funds for building the 284 Superliner cars could be better spent rebuilding the entire current fleet of 2000 cars to head end power, thus eliminating the obsolete equipment problems nationwide in a short time.

There is nothing mysterious or complicated about converting cars to head end power. For the heating system, replace steam coils and radiators with electric heating units (made commercially by the millions). For the air conditioning system, replace the D.C. motors in the condenser, evaporator and compressor units with three-phase A/C motors (a common, inexpensive commercial item). If any air conditioner coils are defective, replacements can be purchased from several manufacturers. In actuality, any commercial mechanical contractor could do the conversion, as it is no different in scope from any commercial building job.

Being a former private railroad car owner and in the air conditioning field, I've made a cost estimate of $40,000 to $50,000 per car for head end power conversion.

My proposition to Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada is this: Sell me a surplus car and I'll convert it to head end power, itemizing time and materials for your study. Upon completion, I will offer to sell it back for $40,000 to $50,000, depending upon the type of car. How about it, Amtrak, VIA Rail Canada--what can you lose?

Attention private car owners: Ignore the so-called experts who state how complicated and expensive it is to make your cars compatible with HEP equipment. It is quite simple. Contact me for the details.

Ken Roeh
1419 S. 11th Avenue
Yakima WA 98902
(509) 248-7777 (home) (509) 248-0564 (509) 575-7062 (work)